

## Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, July 17, 1881, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. (envelope postmarked July 17, 1881, Cambridge) My dear Mrs. Bell:

Thank you very much for the very pretty little combination book and the kind thoughts that sent it. It is just what I want, and the "Registre de Visite" will be very useful next winter, just here there is nobody to call or be called upon. I had a few other little things a serpentine bangle from Elsie and flower pin from Alec. I was much disappointed that the doctor would not allow me to drive into Boston to buy a present for Alec which I had intended should be a set of sofa and chairs for his study. Alec I have hardly seen the last few days, he has been hard at work day and night on an apparatus for the use of the President's physicians. Seems to me nearly every inventor is at work upon something for his more than Majesty. He thought he would have it finished and be off to Washington last night but alas an accident happened and from the heights Alec has gone down to the depths. However he has gone to work again and hopes perhaps to get off tonight. He takes a bunch of grapes from me to Mrs. Garfield, please see they get promptly to her, or they will be spoiled.

My "childer" continue well and enjoying the shade of the trees where it is always cool, however, hot the sun may be.

Saturday. My letter has been considerably delayed, as however, it will show I have tried to thank you before I will send it now.

Life has gone on quietly since Alec left, my babies are 2 well and have a new nurse, but she only came yesterday, and poor little Daisy is rather afraid of her. It would rather amuse you to see the little thing toddling around, she is hardly a moment off her feet when awake, she was very pretty yesterday. Elsie had been naughty and was still crying so I told baby

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to go and kiss Elsie, which the little thing solemnly toddled off to do, no use, so she came back gravely. I sent her again, again the little mouth was held up in vain, back she came, so I kissed her and gave her a flower. Straight back to sister Elsie went the child and offered it to her to smell, I am sorry to say even that was rather a failure, but Elsie is not often so naughty.

My Cousin, Mr. Scudder has just called here on his way to the mountains. Don't you think it most time for you to be flitting also. It must be ever so much cooler here than in Washington, yet Cambridge is nearly deserted, everybody who is anybody has gone. Can't you and Mr. Bell and Mary all come and make me a visit, and go to the seashore. I am trying to secure rooms at Prouts Neck for a week from Next Tuesday. It is a small place, and the hotels are little more than boarding houses, but some of the best people of Boston go there, and it is always very cool. It is about six hours altogether from our house there, four in the cars, and an hours ride at each end. Let me know if you won't think of going for it is always so crowded that we have to engage rooms weeks in advance. I would rather take you there than anywhere nearer here for you will need really bracing air after the sultry atmosphere of Washington. The prices are very moderate also.

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You asked me sometime ago if you should write to my cousin Gertrude. It is not necessary, and she would scarcely expect it from you, but if you liked to write she would be much pleased and think you very friendly. About who is to give the first invitation, I never heard the point raised and my cousin Miss Blatchford said she never did either. Alec and I looked over a book of Washington etiquette and saw nothing bearing on it so I should do just as I wanted to. I have often invited people after calling myself and before they returned my first call. If you want to know Mrs. Blaine or any Congressman's wife you must call first and they will either return or invite you in which latter case you will have to call again. How does the baby get on. I think of it quite often, but fancy that the fewer

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clothes it has just now the better, but I have several flannels for it next fall. However if it is in want of anything please let me know and I will be glad to get it.

With much love to you all, Affectionately, Mabel.